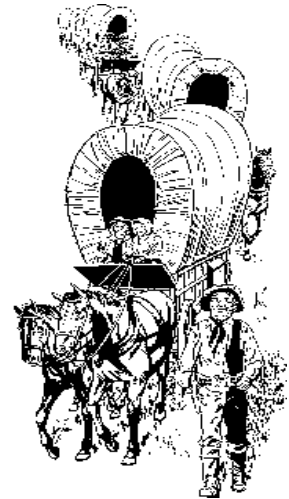


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails
Association, Idaho Chapter



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Tentative Calendar of Events

Jan 27 th – 30 th 2022	San Diego Symposium and Board Meeting
Mar 1 st 2022	Community Ed Class – WY to Fort Hall
Mar 9 th 2022	Community Ed Class – Back Country Byway
Mar 16 th 2022	Community Ed Class – N. Alternate
Spring 2022	Visit to INL to see Jeffreys-Goodale Cutoff (Limited number of visitors)
Aug 28 – Sep 3 rd 2022	Annual Convention, Casper WY

Message from the President

By Jerry Eichhorst

The fall chapter meeting was held on Saturday, October 23, at the Idaho Pizza Company in Boise. It was great to be able to see the members in person again. My thanks to Gar Elison for stepping up to be a chapter Director. After a short business meeting John Briggs talked about being the new OCTA President and fundraising plans. Paul Dinwiddie then talked about the pre-convention tour he and Don Wind led. Paul also shared a quilt made by his great-great grandmother. The backing of the quilt was made from the wagon cover used when the family traveled from Illinois to Oregon in 1852. After lunch several members of the group traveled to southeast Boise to view the ruts discovered a couple years ago. It is hoped that these ruts can be developed by Ada County into a walking park for school children. I am looking forward to teaching my Boise Schools Community Education classes on the Oregon Trail in Idaho again in March. The classes are scheduled as follows:

OREGON TRAIL: WYOMING TO FORT HALL (22W-HIS-003)

March 1, 2022 (Tue), West Junior High, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

MAIN OREGON TRAIL BACK COUNTRY BYWAY (22W-HIS-004)

March 9, 2022 (Wed), West Junior High, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

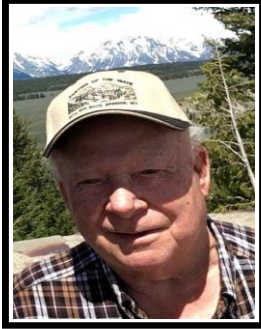
NORTH ALTERNATE OREGON TRAIL (22W-HIS-005)

March 16, 2022 (Wed), West Junior High, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

You can get more information about the classes and register for them later in December at boiselearns.org.

I am planning to have the annual byway tour in mid-April and working with City of Rocks personnel to plan an outing there in mid-May. Please watch the chapter website calendar page (idahoocta.org/calendar) for chapter activities in the spring.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



Lyle Lambert June 1, 1942 – November 24, 2021

Lyle is with Jesus and the angels after a terminal bout with Liver Cancer. He was courageous, loving, and kind through it all.

Lyle was born in Caldwell, Idaho, the second child of Irvin and Emily Lambert of Star. He was raised on their family dairy farm in Star, in the little green house off the highway which today is the Star foodbank. He grew up a normal boy in a small rural town attending and graduating from Meridian High School.

The day after graduation, he was on his way to the Navy in San Diego. He mentioned that he sat on a plane next to Raymond Burr the actor (Perry Mason) and he recalled Mr. Burr was amazed a young man would go right to the military so soon out of school.

Lyle had the distinction of being his Navy class's number one recruit. He was an Electrician's Mate 1st EM2 and served from 1960 to 1962 including being in the Cuban blockade during the Bay of Pigs Cuban Missile crisis. Lyle is listed in the US Navy Memorial log in Washington DC. He was a Veteran and proud of it. While in the Navy, he met Armentia Katherine Bevins through a shipmate and got married shortly after getting out of the Navy in Norfolk VA. He and his wife moved back to Star and had a son Jerry followed by another son Johnny. Lyle was able to gain employment with Otis Elevator company in Boise as an elevator service technician. Lyle divorced and married Virginia Smith of Filer ID then moved to Pocatello to take over as regional area service tech encompassing southeastern Idaho, southwestern Montana, western Wyoming, and northern Nevada. Lyle had a near fatal car wreck in 1981 which made him discontinue the regional service work for Otis and got employment with the State of Idaho at Idaho State University. He also started a business in Blackfoot purchasing an old pawn shop and starting A to Z Guns and Antiques. Shooting sports was a passion of Lyle's and anyone who knows him could find him at the Pocatello trap club or some NRA, Ducks Unlimited, or some shooting banquet supporting the causes. He also had a passion for the Oregon Trail especially the history through Idaho. Lyle was involved in the Idaho OCTA chapter and personally (along with other rut nuts) placed several trail markers across Idaho over the years. Lyle's wife Virginia passed away and he met his love of his life Nadine Novis Wellard. Nadine brought Lyle lots of happiness and they enjoyed dancing and partying. They met officially at a Halloween party and as such kept the partying going well into their 70s. They loved to karaoke and dance together. They were definitely two who had fun in life! If anyone knows Lyle there were no strangers to him just new friends, be it in a restaurant, bar, or side of the road, he would engage them and become friends. He was a friend to everyone he met and knew. Lyle truly enjoyed life and loved all his family and friends very much. Lyle left behind his wife Nadine of 17 years, four stepdaughters, one stepson, two sons, several grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Lyle did have a wonderful life! The family wants to very much thank all the people from Heritage Home Health and Hospice who helped take care of Lyle during his illness. They are truly wonderful people. In lieu of flowers, Lyle would like anything in donations to Veterans, OCTA, or shooting sports.

Finally, thank you to Wilkes Funeral Home for making a peaceful transition. Lyle did not want any services but said to feel free to have a cold beer in his name.

Lyle's son Jerry has agreed to step into Lyle's position as a Director of IOCTA. We appreciate his willingness to serve in this way.

In Memoriam – Lyle Lambert



Lyle, second from right, at City of Rocks on the California Trail in 2012. Chapter President Jerry Eichhorst is second left



Lyle, on the right, marking the Lander Road in 2009. Jerry Eichhorst on the left.



Lyle with (left) Dan Dunne IOCTA Treasurer and (right) Fred Dykes (historian,

author) near Big Butte on Jeffreys-Goodale Cutoff in 2016



Lyle with Fred Dykes and Dan Dunne at the ruins of Cerro Grande near Jeffreys-Goodale Cutoff in 2016. Big Southern Butte is in the background



Lyle on the McTucker Road near Atomic City in 2015. Atomic City sits on the edge of the Idaho National Laboratory property and close to Experimental Breeder Reactor (EBR) 1, the world's first electricity generating nuclear power plant. A mini boom ensued but didn't last. Today just 25 people live there.

Pre-Convention Tour of the California Trail

By Don Wind and Paul Dinwiddie

OCTA members near and far who couldn't wait for the OCTA Elko convention to begin joined the two-day pre-convention tour on September 11 and 12 which retraced the California Trail from the City of Rocks National Reserve to as far west as U.S. Highway 93 about 25 miles north of Wells, Nevada. The tour was led by Paul Dinwiddie and assisted by Don Wind.

Among the tour highlights were probable emigrant burial sites, pioneer inscriptions found at City of Rocks, the crossroads of the California Trail, Salt Lake Alternate Trail and Kelton Road, the crossings of Pinnacle Pass and Granite Pass, the Devil's Grave area, the famous Record Bluff and a series of creeks and springs across the Idaho, Utah and Nevada deserts that were fortuitously located to sustain the pioneers and their animals with water and grass. Observed trail ruts were numerous and often well-defined. In some cases, the ruts had eroded into swales five feet deep. The further west that the tour progressed along the trail, the more desolate the route became. With much of the trail and vistas unchanged since this route of the California Trail was first used in 1843, tour participants had the opportunity to experience what the pioneers did. The tour highlighted the vastness of the land, the dust of the trail, the welcome sight of a spring, the threat of danger, and for the earliest wagon trains, the sheer loneliness of being out in the great unknown.

The tour started Friday night with an informal get acquainted dinner at a local restaurant in Burley, ID for the 16 participants from 7 States. It was an enjoyable evening getting to know fellow "rut nuts" and OCTA members from other chapters

At 8 AM Saturday morning the group assembled and 11 vehicles caravanned the 50 miles to City of Rocks National Reserve Park headquarters in Almo, ID. Along the way we stopped at a T-rail marker and interpretive sign showing trail routes in the area north of Almo. The T-rail markers placed by Trails West, Inc. were featured along much of the tour, providing location information, pioneer diary entries and descriptions of life on the trail. We were met at the City of Rock headquarters by park ranger Shalene Dickard. Shalene would be our guide for most of the day as we traveled through City of Rocks.



Circle Valley Overlook with Shalene Dickard

Our first stop after leaving the park headquarters was the Circle Valley overlook. There is no signage pointing out the overlook and it is a short walk from the road. This view is known to the park rangers and is reserved for their guided tours. Little has changed and the view entering Circle Valley is the same as that seen by emigrants 170 years ago.

Our next stop was at Camp Rock. Here our tour group was able to examine the

emigrant signatures on the rocks. Shalene explained some of the history of the area and pointed out a couple of the emigrant graves which were recently identified during earlier IOCTA exploration of the area. Park rangers typically don't give the exact location of pioneer graves to visitors. Our group felt privileged that we were able to see the actual grave sites. One couple on the tour has experience using divining rods to identify grave sites and they demonstrated their divining technic to the group.

Leaving Camp Rock, we headed to Pinnacle Pass. Along the way we stopped at Register Rock and examined more emigrant signatures written on the large rocks. Arriving at the parking lot near Twin Sisters, we hiked the 1/3-mile to Pinnacle Pass. 250,000 California Trail travelers funneled through the pass into the next drainage south. It was a worthwhile hike and the group could see wheel ruts in the granite rock.



Pinnacle Pass

After our visit to Pinnacle Pass, we continued south and stopped at the junction where the Salt Lake Alternate joined the California Trail.

From there we headed west and had our last stop in the City of Rocks Reserve – the information sign on the western edge of the park describing the route to Granite Pass which we could see looking west across Junction Valley. We thanked Shalene for the fantastic tour, said our goodbyes, and left the City of Rocks for Granite Pass.



Looking west from Granite Pass

It was a long dusty drive as we made our way up to Granite Pass, the 6,844 feet elevation summit of the Goose Creek Mountains, and enjoyed a spectacular view looking west – a preview of our journey the next day.

This was the last stop of the day. We headed back down to Paradise Valley and followed Birch Creek north to Oakley, looking for remnants of the Kelton Road as we drove, and back to Burley for the night.

Sunday morning, we once again departed Burley at 8AM. This time we headed south to Oakley and re-grouped at the local park for our one and only comfort stop for the day. Continuing south on Goose Creek Road we arrived at our first trail stop of the day. Devils Grave is at the bottom of the western descent of Granite Pass. It was one of the most difficult and treacherous descents on the California

Trail. The group walked and explored the trail ruts in the area.



Some of the group at Devils Grave

After leaving Devils Grave, we stopped at several of the T-rail markers highlighting California Trail sites as we travelled up Goose Creek toward Record Bluff.



Record Bluff

We followed the ranch road across the open grass to Record Bluff. Seeing the emigrant names carved in the grey volcanic pumice rock bluff was a highlight for everyone in our tour group.

We spent some time examining the carved names and speculating on the origin of the sculptured face.



Sculpted face on Record Bluff

We left Record Bluff and continued on our way.



California Trail at Record Bluff looking toward Granite Pass

With many miles of dusty gravel road still to go and only a short time, we hit the highlights. We stopped at the trail descent out of Little Goose Creek and at Rock Spring. And we pointed out other sites as we passed; the divide between Snake River and Great Basin drainages, Emigrant Springs, Chicken Springs, and Thousand Springs Valley. Our final stop was the T-rail marker at Hot and Cold Springs near the entrance to the Winecup Ranch. From here it was a short distance to US Highway 93 and the drive to Elko. Our tour ended with just enough time to travel to Elko and make it to the convention welcome reception.

Over the two days our tour travelled on dusty back country roads through desolate and wide-open country where little has changed since the California bound emigrants passed through 170 years ago. It

was a very rewarding experience; both travelling the route and being able to lead a tour group and share the experience with other California Trail enthusiasts.

Giving the Jeffreys-Goodale Cutoff a Facelift

by Don Wind

IOCTA member Gary Makey of Idaho Falls enjoys getting out on the trails, especially in eastern Idaho. About a year ago, he was walking a portion of the Jeffreys-Goodale Cutoff that crossed BLM land east of Craters of the Moon National Monument. Gary kept notes on his observations, including the condition of carsonite trail markers placed years ago by the Department of the Interior and OCTA. He noted the GPS locations of the markers, especially those that were damaged or down. He counted four carsonite markers down and three broken. The damage was probably done by cattle, as there are BLM livestock allotments in the area and plenty of “evidence” on the ground. Wanting to correct the situation, Gary headed out to the area with Don Wind on October 22nd, the day prior to the fall chapter meeting in Boise. The section of the trail traversed was on the north side of US Highway 20 starting at mile marker 237, heading west. At this point on the highway one can see the carsonite markers about 80 yards to the north.

Departing their vehicle, they found the trace of the trail easily. In some cases, the trail was a swale and in others it was two poorly defined strips of dirt through the sagebrush. More markers were down than what Gary had identified earlier.



View looking east toward Arco with IOCTA member Gary Makey on the trail. Zoom in on the photo to see other carsonite markers in the distance.

Seven downed markers were pounded back into the ground if they weren't damaged and at least three broken markers were replaced. This work was completed over a distance of 1-1/2 miles of trail to the west of highway mile marker 237. For reference, the Craters of the Moon National Monument

eastern border and entrance sign is located at mile marker 235.



Probable pioneer grave immediately adjacent to the trail. Big Southern Butte can be seen on the horizon.

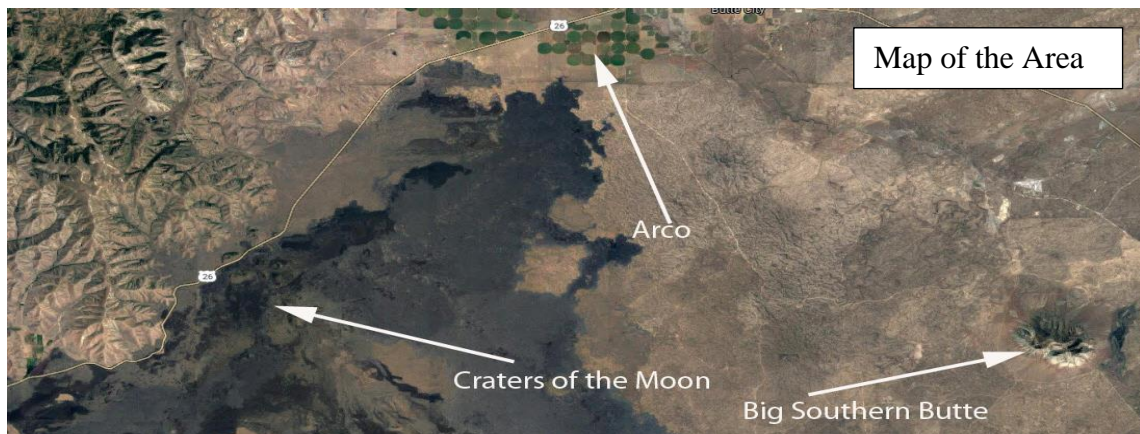
The most interesting find of the day was a pile of basalt rocks adjacent to the trail. Recognizing that there were no basalt outcrops or scattered rock on the ground as far as one could see and no apparent reason for a rancher or BLM to place the rocks there, it is highly probable that this is a pioneer gravesite. The basalt blocks are about 1 to 2 feet in diameter. Otherwise, no rock was observed along this stretch of trail.

This section of the trail afforded beautiful views for the pioneers. Looking east they saw the southern end of the Lost River Range as a backdrop to where Arco is now located. To the south, they viewed the ever-smaller Big Southern Butte that they had passed days earlier and the expansive Snake River Plain. And to the west was the Craters of the Moon area that became ever more interesting as they approached it.

October 22nd was a beautiful day to be out on the trails in Idaho, although it started to rain 10 minutes after returning to their vehicles. The timing was great!



Looking west, a newly-placed marker with the volcanic cones of Craters of the Moon in the middle horizon.



Updating Idaho Highway Historical Markers

By Don Wind

It has come to my attention recently that the State Historical Society is working with the Idaho Transportation Department to repair, refurbish or replace the familiar wooden highway historical markers you see throughout Idaho. You can peruse a description of these signs on the web at: <https://history.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/Idaho-Highway-Historical-Marker-Guide.pdf>. In your travels across the State, you may have come across a sign that you thought contained an error or that could have been enhanced with better information. If so, this is an opportunity to report it to improve the information displayed on the sign. For example, I noticed an error on Sign #219 titled "John Bidwell" stating that Bidwell arrived in the Soda Springs area on August 12, 1841 when in fact he and his wagon train arrived on August 10, 1841 and departed the area on August 11 as documented in letters and journals of the time.



One of over 240 highway historical markers throughout Idaho

Dan Everhart, Outreach Historian for the State Historic Preservation Office is taking the lead for the Idaho State Historical Society in working with the Idaho Transportation Department on this project. His efforts are focused on the written content of the signs. Dan has informed me that this is a multi-year project to repair or replace signs that have been in place for many decades. All signs within the State have been ranked according to their physical condition with those in the worst condition to be upgraded first. Dan welcomes the submittal of proposed corrections or comments by OCTA members.

To submit information to Dan Everhart regarding these highway markers, send an email to dan.everhart@ishs.idaho.gov.

Diaries Across Idaho

By Jerry Eichhorst

Descriptions of Rebuilt Fort Hall

By 1838, the outer walls of Fort Hall had been rebuilt using sun-dried adobe bricks. Here are some of the descriptions of the fort in the first 5 years after the rebuild.

The Fort is built of dobie, a kind of clay made into brick & dried in the sun, cool in the summer & warm in the winter.

Sarah Gilbert White Smith, July 28, 1838

The fort is built of doughbees which are clay made in the form of brick two feet long, six inches deep. The wall is double & the room as cool as a cellar almost.

Mary Walker, July 29, 1838

The fort lies hard by the [Snake] river, and is built in a square of about eighty by eighty feet, suggestive of barracks. The style is essentially that of Fort Laramie, except that the outer walls, ten to twelve feet high, are constructed in this case out of partly baked brick instead of wood. A small cannon is in the courtyard. The fort owns many horses and six cows...

Frederick Adolph Wislizenus, August, 1839

...before us rose the white battlements of Fort Hall!... We spent the [September] 2d and 3d most agreeably with Mr. Walker, in his hospitable adobie castle;

Thomas Jefferson Farnham, 1839

Fort Hall is a beautiful place, in a handsome part of the country.

Joseph Williams, 1841

[August] 15 visited the Fort found it much smaller than Laramie but verry well conducted.

Medorem Crawford, 1842

Monday, [September] 11th... Fort Hall is situated in a large plain on Snake River; & built of squaw cakes of mud baked in the sun; it is inferior to Fort Laramie. Plenty of timber, water and grass.

John Boardman, 1843

There we crossed the mountains to Fort Hall. It was occupied by the Hudson's Bay Co. I think it was Grant that had charge of that. All those forts were made of adobe walls like the wall around a lot and inside of that wall were adobe buildings, generally small. The wall around the lot was 6 or 8 feet high, and about 18 inches thick. It could not have been knocked down very easily, but the Indians had nothing but arrows and could not shoot through it.

Ninevah Ford, 1843

...on the 13th of September we arrived at Fort Hall. It is situated on the South bank of Snake River, in a rich valley, about twelve miles wide and twenty-file miles long... The Company keep several hundred cattle and horses at this place, which live through the winter, generally, without much attention. We were told by one of the members of the Company, that wheat had been sown at the Fort, and grew well. Fort Hall is built of the same material, and nearly in the same manner, as the Forts on the Platte are.

Overton Johnson, 1843

Thurs. [September] 14th. Paid a visit to Capt. Grant. Fort Hall is a small and rather ill constructed Fort, built of "Dobies"... Wheat, turnips have been grown here with success. Cattle thrive well. The nights are always cold. Grant has a large herd of cattle and fine band of horses...

Theodore Talbot, 1843

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IOCTA Officers and Directors

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